

Wives of U.S. and British Ambassadors Visit the Eritrean Women's Community Center in South Tel Aviv



Photo: Mary Knight

Ms. Julie Fisher, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro, and Mrs. Celia Gould, wife of British Ambassador to Israel Matthew Gould, visited the Eritrean Women's Community Center in south Tel Aviv on November 6. During the visit, Ms. Fisher and Mrs. Gould learned about the child care, health, education, and support services the center provides to Eritrean women in the community. Ms. Fisher and Mrs. Gould also had an opportunity to meet mothers, play with children, and enjoy home-cooked Eritrean food.

Zebib Sultan, who arrived in Israel three years ago from Eritrea, started the center in July 2012 with assistance from Amnesty International. Sultan decided to start the center to address a need for Eritrean women to be supported by women who speak their language and understand their culture.

"It was a meaningful visit, filled with informative first-hand accounts of the plight of Eritrean women, men and children," Ms. Fisher said. "Hearing about the initiatives to prevent domestic abuse, provide pregnancy support and education, as well as learning about the health care challenges they face, was compelling."

Mrs. Gould said, "It was an honor to meet Zebib and see first-hand the amazing work her and the team at the community centre do every day in a difficult and complicated situation. Their compassion and hard work makes a huge difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable women in Israeli society."

The center provides low-cost child care services so the women can work during the day, and offers enrichment classes in the evening, such as English, Hebrew, family planning, and computer literacy. The

center also coordinates a group of men and women who work on eradicating domestic violence in the Eritrean community by raising awareness and assisting victims.

Ms. Fisher and Mrs. Gould were accompanied to the center by Ms. Mary Knight, wife of U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission William Grant, and Mrs. Jo Jefferson, wife of the British Military Attaché to Israel, Colonel Nigel Jefferson.

This visit continued Ms. Fisher's outreach to Israel's diverse communities. On October 30, Ms. Fisher visited an early childhood day care center in the Bedouin village of Abu Kaf and Hagar Association's Jewish Arab bilingual school in Be'er Sheva.